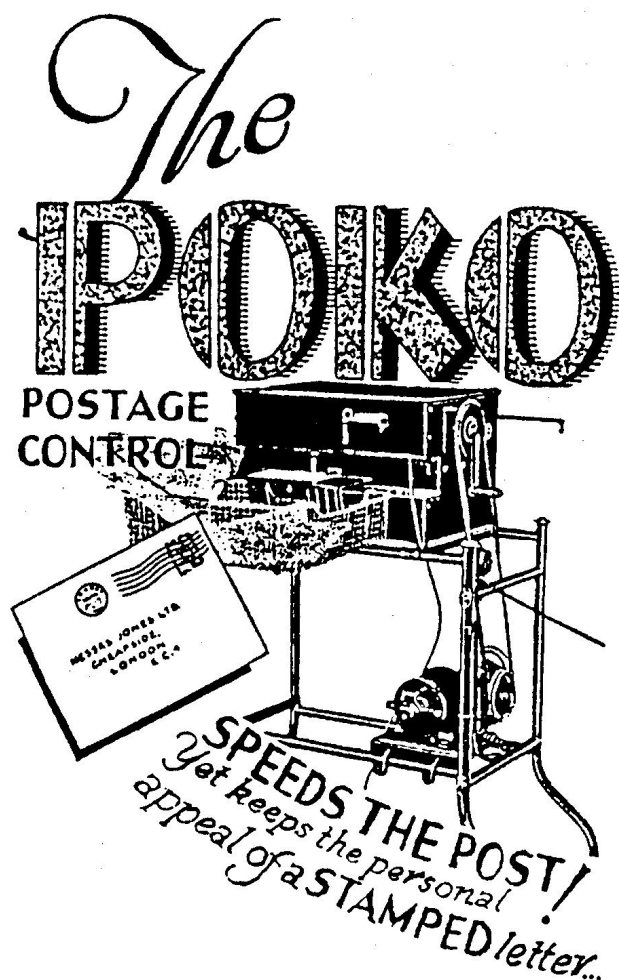
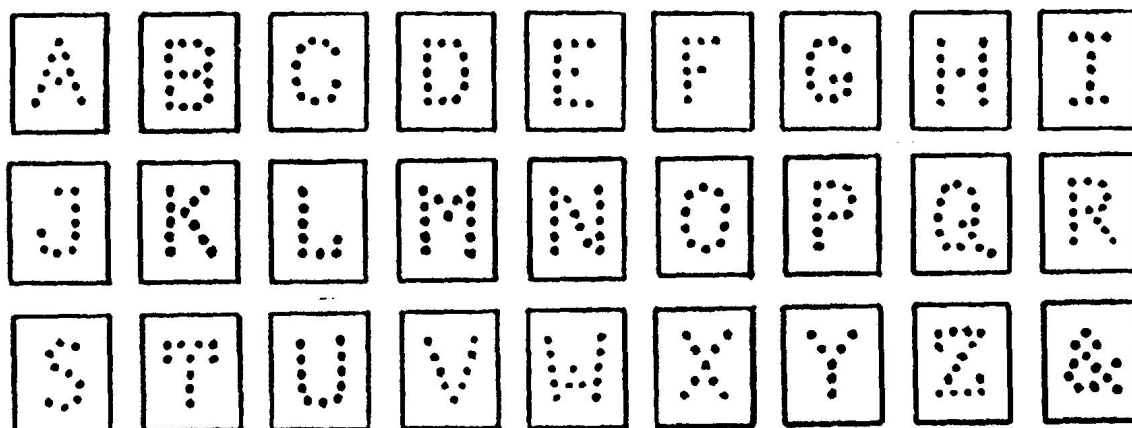


In previous Bulletins I have featured examples from the FIXO and MULTIPOST machines, two of the three principal stamp affixers used in Great Britain. This issue sees the trio complete with a mention of the POKO affixer. It is highly likely that this machine was the only one which perfinned the stamps as well as fixing them to postal items, the others taking pre-perfinned coils.

The POKO was a German machine originally introduced into this country in 1910. After some initial success it fell out of favour in the early years of the First World War. Fortunately for perfin collectors the machine was re-introduced into Britain c1925, by which time a standardised alphabet was in use characterised by a number of seriffed letters. Three sizes of machine were available capable of taking 3, 5 or 7 rolls of stamps. Standard GPO rolls of 960 stamps were used with Lower End First Delivery

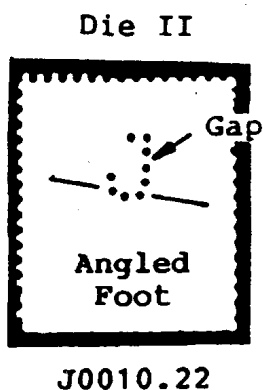
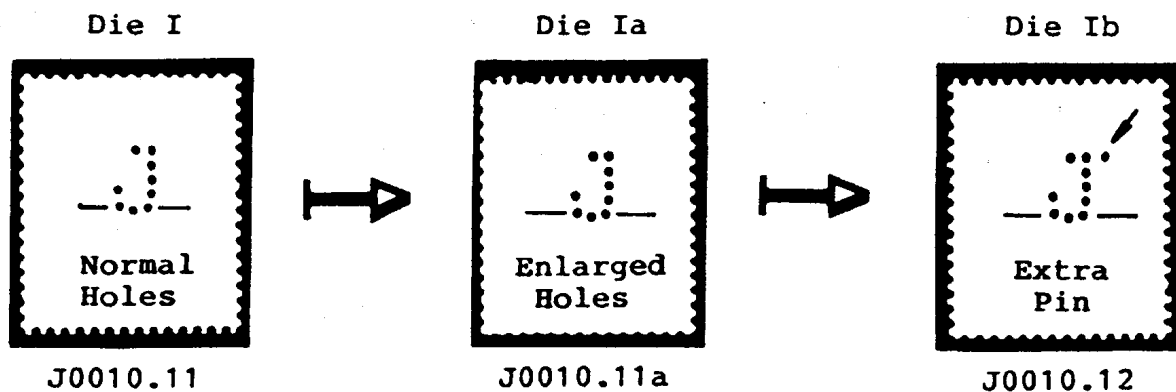


The POKO Standard Alphabet



A common POKO die is the single letter 'J' used by Jaeger & Co. Ltd. of London, the well-known manufacturer of quality woollen goods. Although templates were probably used in the manufacture of the perforating heads, detail differences can sometimes be seen, often leading to some interesting results. In the case of the Jaeger 'J' (J0010.11/Tilles 1.7) it can be deduced that TWO machines were used, one of which was modified twice.

For those fortunate enough to have POKO J's in quantity, first separate them into two groups, one with normal sized holes and the other with distinctly larger ones. Now look at those with normal sized holes, and in particular at the arrangement of holes forming the foot of the J. Again separate into two piles, one with the normal foot, the other showing a distinct angle. With any luck you will now have three piles of stamps to which you can add a fourth in the shape of the 10 pin 'J' J0010.12/Tilles 1.8. Illustrated below are the main features to look for. A table also shows the issues involved, based on 100+ stamps inspected.



Die	I	Ia	Ib	II
GV Photo	*			
E8	*			
GVI Dark	*			*
Light	*	*		*
Changed		*		*
EII Tudor Cr.		*	*	*
St Ed Cr.			*	*

Here then is my suggested sequence of events.

1. Jaeger & Co. Ltd. purchased their first POKO machine c1935, producing the perfin we list as J0010.11 (Die I).
2. A few years later, perhaps around 1939, the company purchased another machine fitted with the die producing the 'angled foot' (Die II - J0010.22). It appears that for a few years at least the two machines were operated concurrently in their original conditions.
3. However, sometime after 1941 when the GVI light colours were introduced, Die I had its holes deliberately enlarged forming i.e. Ia - (J0010.11a), probably as part of a general refurbishment to the machine although no deterioration has been noted in the quality of the perfins produced.
4. Both machines then continued to be used into the early years of Elizabeth II's reign, when c1954 Die Ia was further modified by the addition of an extra pin forming Die Ib (J0010.12/Tilles 1.8). This 10th pin is clearly an addition, sitting slightly high and a trifle too far to the right.

Please help to confirm (or otherwise!) this tentative chronology by checking your holdings of POKO J's, and reporting the various values, issues, postmarks and dates involved for Dies I, Ia, Ib and Die II. Examples showing dates are particularly important in pinpointing precisely when the modifications took place. Notification of any identified covers would also be welcomed.

I have written to Jaeger & Co. requesting any additional information that they may have tucked away in their archives relating either to the POKO machines or to their stamp security in general. They are kindly looking into the matter but nothing has yet come to light.

Close inspection of the POKO perfins DT (D4710.02 etc.) may yield similar results, but that's another story!